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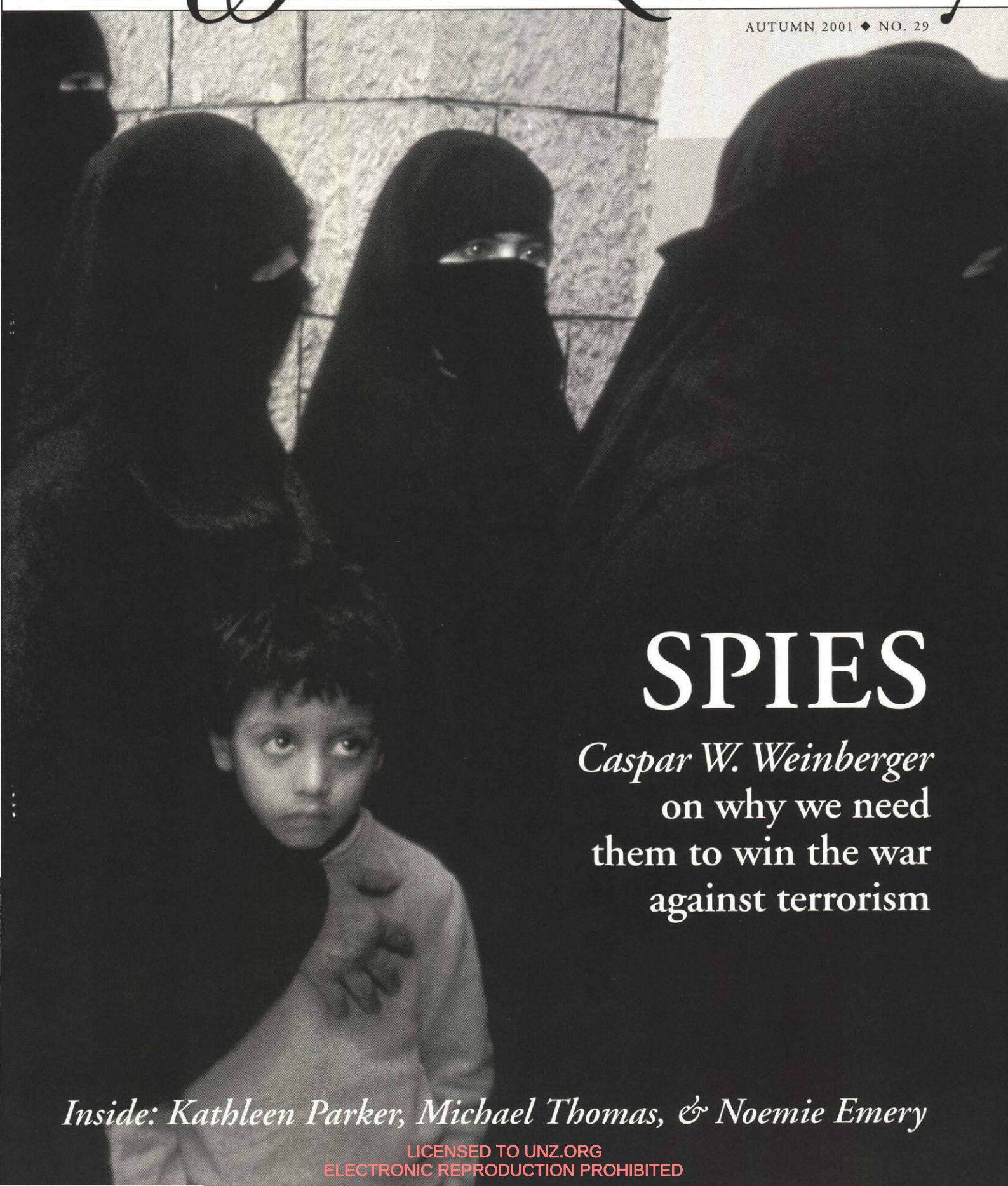

SPIES

Caspar W. Weinberger on why we need them to win the war against terrorism

Inside: Kathleen Parker, Michael Thomas, & Noemie Emery

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Diary

Put Out More Flags

As England prepared to go to war against Hitler, Guy Crouchback, the hero of Evelyn Waugh's *Men at Arms*, felt confusion melt away: "When Prague fell, he knew that war was inevitable," Waugh wrote. "He expected his country to go to war in a panic, for the wrong reasons or for no reason at all, with the wrong allies, in pitiful weakness. But now, splendidly, everything had become clear. The enemy was in plain view, huge and hateful, all disguise cast off. It was the Modern Age in arms."

Waugh is probably not the obvious writer to turn to in a time such as the present, but I do. Waugh didn't like modernity—that is, the world America has created—and he was a terrible snob. But Waugh did capture the romance of the history of the West—including its valorous exploits in battle—which we must regain if we are to wage war against an enemy who loathes the West's achievements.

War often comes on the heels of a trivial age—as it did for Guy Crouchback and for all Waugh's sparkling youth and as it now does for us. After the World Trade Center was attacked in 1993, after U.S. embassies were blown up, and the *USS Cole* was hit by terrorists, instead of fighting back in a lethal way, we huffed and puffed. Some went so far as to sympathize with the enemy, insisting that "conditions" (bin Laden's billionaire background?) had created a "cycle of violence" that we dare not perpetuate. Our complacency was presaged in *Men at Arms.*

Predicting that Hitler would not prove a genuine threat to England, Guy Crouchback's brother-in-law, Arthur Box-Bender, a Member of Parliament, sniffed, "No one in his senses would try to break either the Maginot or the Siegfried Line. The Germans are short of almost every industrial essential. As soon as they realize Mr. Hitler's bluff has been called, we shan't hear much more of Mr. Hitler."

Our enemy, of course, is an evil creature, who inhabits caves and abhors modernity, which, indeed, he simply refuses to recognize. He refers to secular Westerners as "crusaders." He is stuck in the Middle Ages, when Christians clashed with Muslims led by the glamorous and chivalrous Saladin. (Osama bin Laden, you're no Saladin!) Still, as Mr. Hitler conferred clarity on Guy Crouchback, Mr. bin Laden on Sept. 11 conferred clarity on us. We awoke from a decade of astonishing shallowness to realize that there are enemies far more baleful than—say—the tobacco companies.

We realized, too, that there are things worth dying for—indeed, as the columnist George Will pointed out, at the prayer service at the National Cathedral, the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" was sung in its original, unbowdlerized version. ("As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free" had become in our decadent age "let us live to make men free.")

We as a society had come to regard war as always immoral—but now we know better. Ordinary people, and even many pundits, usually the last to know, grasp this old new truth instinctively and bravely. Some, however, remain mired in the frivolous world we inhabited before Sept. 11.

A dotty female Episcopal priest, for example, suggested "bombing Afghanistan with butter" and other western goodies. While a Franciscan priest gave his life to administer the last rites to a fireman dying in the shadow of the World Trade Center towers, Father William Byron, S.J., in an article on the attack in the Washington archdiocese's *Catholic Standard*, fretted about the nature of *American* society. Christianity had flourished in the catacombs (not capitalistic!), he noted, and worried if it's possible to be Christian in skyscrapers. Oops!

But most people have responded in a way that makes one proud to be an American. Commentators, perhaps the only segment of society still mired in the Vietnam quagmire, wonder if we will be willing to endure casualties—we've already had more than 5,000 casualties, as those killed in the Sept. 11 attacks should be called in preference to the word "victims"—but the American people know that we must. (If we forget that we must be willing to sustain casualties, George Will warns, bin Laden will be only too happy to remind us.)

In the epigraph to *Put Out More Flags*, another novel set at the outbreak of World War II, Waugh quoted from Chang Ch'ao: "A little injustice in the heart can be drowned by wine, but a great injustice in the world can be drowned only by the sword."

~Charlotte Hays

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The Women's Quarterly

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"No...Actually, I'm her mother, Big Red Riding Hood. Why do you ask?"

Cover photo by Steve McCurry/Magnum Photo; Cartoon (above) by Charles Jaffé

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Sontag & Company

Noemie Emery on Susan Sontag, Elaine Showalter, and September 11

Elaine Showalter has the darndest bad luck. First, *Inventing Herself*, her chatty new book about feminist superstars, preaching the merits of free love and risk-taking, hit the bookstores at about the same time that intern Chandra Levy went missing, possibly as the result of taking one risk too many. Second, she had the worse luck of having war break out in September, exposing Susan Sontag, one of her heroines, as a stunningly self-satisfied blithering idiot, incapable of making the most basic moral distinctions between human error and cold-blooded evil. Feminism's great talent for giving bad advice to women has never appeared quite so crashingly evident. Nor has the rot at its core.

Showalter, who has a long and brave record of trying to inject life and humor into the grim world of the academy, has overcompensated here with a gossipy, breathless, gee-whiz account of an odd collection of women, who have nothing in common beyond their notoriety, and their often irregular personal lives. Here you will find the brilliant Rebecca West, one of the great writers of the twentieth century (though the scope of her work is not even hinted at); the estimable Vera Brittain, known mainly for her unbearable account of personal loss in the World War I generation; and the erratic but talented Mary McCarthy. But you will also find, given equivalent prominence, erstwhile Al Gore wardrobe coordinator and alpha male expert Naomi Wolf; failed exhibitionist Germaine Greer; former First Victim turned senator Hillary Clinton; and Oprah Winfrey, famous for dumbing down popular culture. You will also find here the unhappy Princess Diana, killed in a car crash with her rich playboy lover. Showalter claims to have found in these women the lines of a "feminist intellectual heritage," though some of these women barely have intellects. Any "heritage" they might share is bizarre.

In this ragtag assortment of brains, scolds, and nitwits, Showalter's clear favorites are Sontag and Simone de Beauvoir, who represent blackstocking lifestyle models for women protesting society's norms. The latter revealed this in her strange relationship with Jean-Paul Sartre, in which she defined "liberation" as turning normative mores upside down. She would not make coffee for Sartre, iron his shirts or run everyday errands. What she would do for him was pimp shamelessly, endanger her academic career by "recruiting" her young students for him, and put up with endless betrayals.

In Sontag, this hostility to bourgeoise conventions took the form of an intense contempt for her country. As Showalter writes, apparently approvingly, "The ordinary details of American life in the forties drove her crazy, led her to grind her teeth, twirl her hair, overeat." Especially popular culture: "The weekly comedy shows, the treacly hit parade, the hysterical narratings of baseball games, and prizefights, the radio—whose racket filled the living room—was an endless torment."

Sontag, apparently, continues to be driven crazy by life in America. On the Monday after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, it was not surprising to read Sontag in the *New Yorker* calling America "stupid," suggesting that America had it coming, and saying that the major problem is that America has too much power in the world. Sontag was particularly offended by the president's address and by Congress' singing "God Bless America." She wrote, "We have a robotic president who assures us that America still stands tall." Sontag compared the "rhetoric" of American officials to "the unanimously applauded, self-congratulatory bromides of a Soviet Party Congress." Nowhere did Sontag suggest that there might be anything wrong in flying planes filled with civilians into buildings filled with other civilians. Nor did she show concern for the casualties.

In this she was closer than ever to Simone de Beauvoir, who could find nothing amiss in a Soviet Union that killed more than 30 million civilians. Nor did the Third Reich much annoy de Beauvoir. As Showalter herself admits of this feminist heroine, "During the war, de Beauvoir managed to sustain a set of moral, political, and sexual definitions that made it possible for her to sleep with her students, publish her writings, produce her plays, and make her way in occupied Paris without any anxiety about collaborating with the Germans or guilt about putting her needs first."

These are the models she wants to emulate? No wonder so many are saying no thanks. ◆

Essayist Noemie Emery is a contributing editor of the Weekly Standard.

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The Human Factor

Caspar W. Weinberger says that electronic intelligence is important, but there's no substitute for old-fashioned spies.

In all of the welter of discussion, criticisms, predictions and proposals that followed the September 11th horror, there is one point on which all seemed agreed: We must improve our intelligence capabilities. Few define what it is we most need.

I am not one to join in the quick, easy criticism of the CIA. They can and do gather vast amounts of intelligence from many sources. But most of those sources, such as overhead reconnaissance, cannot tell us what evil is being planned, by whom, or where terrorist or other attacks will be launched.

Our big gap and the capability we most need can only come from human intelligence—information gathered from human resources on the ground in enemy territory. In short, we need spies.

Of course, it is most important for us to know what can be gathered from our sources in the skies: Large troop movements, placement of big weapons, location of enemy ships, conversations and communications, and that we can do very well.

But what we most need—and what is most difficult to secure—is the knowledge in advance of what terrorist groups are planning, who and what are their targets, what methods they will use, and information of that kind.

How do we get that? James Webb, former secretary of the Navy and one of our greatest war novelists and writers, has it right:

"We need to have a sophisticated and effective intelligence apparatus reconstituted in this country. We...have become paralyzed by a lot of political correctness debates and by the movements in the mid-1970s to take apart a lot of our intelligence functioning, domestically and overseas.... We need to have an apparatus that is free to do the job it wasn't able to do in this incident."

As Lee Hamilton, former chairman of the House Committee on Intelligence, put it: "You have to have spies on the ground to get [the terrorist enemies'] location in real time, to know where he will sleep that night. You have to penetrate their language, their culture."

This is a most difficult assignment. It requires years of preparation to recruit and train people who can infiltrate enemy organizations, join with them in their planning, speak their language, look like them, and be a thousand percent loyal to America and our allies. It may take years of training and years of operations by these hard-to-find spies. We should have started years ago because it is only from human intelligence and reliable first-hand information that we will find out what we need to know and, in time, to prevent such attacks.

Why don't we have it now? Largely because in the mid-1970s a Senate committee headed by then Sen. Frank Church of Idaho looked into the CIA's so-called "dirty tricks," and FBI investigations, and raised a storm of criticisms that democracies could not tolerate the practices or tactics used to gather the information we need to enable us to stay democracies. The criticisms of that committee and the failure to respond to all the "political correctness" of the conventional wisdom of that time has left us sadly bereft of the most valuable of all intelligence resources. The various investigators appeared to take particular delight in revealing secret operations, methods, and sources used and to be used. In the course of all this the identities of several CIA personnel became known, adding to the risks they already faced.

In any event, the recruitment and training of people capable of furnishing human intelligence was strongly discouraged by all these disclosures and we now are sorely lacking in this most vital of our intelligence needs.

We also need far greater funding to rebuild this capability. (About $10 million a year is spent for all CIA covert operations in all of East Asia, compared with about $10 billion for satellites and electronic surveillance, according to the *New York Times*).

And most of all we need an acceptance of the fact that gathering human intelligence for us is an honorable, vitally needed task, and we should give honor (when they can be known) to those who undertake it for us all. ◆

Caspar W. Weinberger, former secretary of defense (1981-87), is chairman of Forbes, Inc.

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G.I. Jane at VMI

Charmaine and Jack Yoest explain why female "Brother Rats" may have a rough time at the nation's oldest military college. A harbinger of things to come?

AFTER SPENDING $10 million to ready the campus for a siege by women, the Virginia Military Institute, the oldest military college in the U.S., in August 1997 reluctantly accepted its first female "Brother Rat." Last May, in a much-publicized ceremony, a bevy of thirteen female cadets received their diplomas, tossing their gloves toward the high ceilings of VMI's Cameron Hall, joining the ranks of the "citizen-soldiers," the brotherhood, that the famous college has been turning out since 1839.

Still, the year had been, in some respects, a decidedly rocky one for the school General George C. Marshall attended. There had been a first of some considerable notoriety: VMI's first pregnant cadet. She opted to remain in the barracks through her second trimester.

Other female cadets apparently had no such desire to linger. The usual graduation euphoria had a particular edge—one of the female graduates, Cadet Maria Vasile, was not nostalgic; she told a reporter for the Associated Press, "I just want to get out of here." Similarly, Cadet Kelly K. Sullivan, though effusive in her praise for VMI discipline, hoped her next bivouac would be cushier. Sullivan noted to a reporter covering the graduation ceremony that at VMI there is "a lot of stuff you have to deal with that you won't have to deal with in the civilian world."

Of course some of the "stuff you have to deal with" at VMI is rooted in its famous "adversative" system of military discipline, which is intended to build unit cohesion as combat preparation. A poignant reminder of this mission sits at the center of campus: A statue of one of VMI's most famous professors, General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson, is inscribed with his famous words, "The Institute will be heard from today." Surrounded by his former VMI students and colleagues, Jackson uttered these words as together they prepared for battle at Chancellorsville. A few hours later he received the wounds from which he later died.

Over a century later, in 1996, Elaine Donnelly, president of the Center for Military Readiness, advised VMI's board and Alumni Association what "stuff" to expect if the school went coed: sexual harassment, pregnancy, and litigation. The Supreme Court had just ruled in *U.S. v. Virginia* that the Constitution's equal protection clause prohibited VMI's 157-year-old men-only tradition. The board faced a choice: Throw open its barracks to women, or renounce its public funding.

The remarks of female cadets to reporters at graduation ceremonies afforded rare, on-the-record acknowledgments of the problems VMI and its women have confronted over the last five years. Donnelly's list now reads like prophecy: gender concerns with physical training, privacy issues, sensitivity training, sexual relationships, and redefinition of "success." In the second year of coed VMI, the young man who had just been selected to assume the corps' highest leadership position, Jerry Webb, was expelled after using his position of authority to coerce sexual favors from female cadets.

After this year's historic pregnancy, VMI instituted a gender-neutral policy that requires the expulsion of all cadets who become parents. This means VMI's attorneys should start preparing for their next Supreme Court appearance.

Drawing by Sandy McClelland

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VMI is proud of, and emphatic about, its refusal to alter its monthly fitness test. However, although the score affects a student's grade point average, cadets are not required to pass it. And with the arrival of women, leadership in the elite Cadre of the Corps is now no longer prohibited to those who fail the test. While there are some women who are able to do well on the test—many of these women are varsity athletes—the fact remains that passing the test represents a higher, if not insurmountable, hurdle for the women than it does for the men. And for most, it requires far more Saturday nights on the Nautilus machine.

Still, the new regime has adamant supporters. One mother of a young man graduating in the Class of 2001 opined to the *Washington Post* that, after having attended a coed VMI, her son was going to be "a better husband and father because he knows how to treat women."

Before the arrival of women, the mission of VMI was to prepare men for leadership to fight and win America's wars. But learning how to treat women is indeed at the top of VMI's pedagogical agenda these days. The VMI management team, under the watchful eye of the United States Justice Department, has attempted to create a nurturing environment where women are humiliated and harangued in an androgynous way equal to their male peers, without, well, actually harassing them.

To that end, cadets are required to attend "focus groups" where they ponder the ontological essence of defining a "date." Students are lectured on newly developed anti-hazing and sexual harassment regulations: They may not date anyone in their chain of command. "Hooking-up" with another cadet is generally handled under "don't-ask, don't tell" as long as it's not in the barracks. But there is to be no touching any other cadet, of any gender, without first gently inquiring, "May I touch you?" Assault and battery is permissible only between consenting adults.

In her book, *Breaking Out: VMI and the Coming of Women*, Laura Fairchild Brodie, the wife of the school's band director, reports that this sensitivity training has had a salutary, musically soothing effect on the men's use of language. One male cadet, after using lewd profanity while "flaming a rat," ended up issuing an abject apology to his female subordinate. The threat of sexual harassment charges, one young man observed, is always hovering in male-female contact. Another inadvertent verbal incident resulted in the woman retreating to the hospital, threatening to leave the school. The potential for a sexual harassment case left the senior warrior-in-training, who had authority over both people involved, near tears.

Political correction is a thief that steals discretionary management time. The chain of command is now consumed with a thousand petty decisions. Brodie reports that VMI leadership was embroiled in concerns that ranged from the mundane—women's underwear and pantyhose—to the medical—menstrual periods and urinary tract infections. Management attention was consumed by meetings on the color and care of all things feminine. Still they were confronted with "unmentionables" hanging in the barracks windows to dry. More meetings. And then there was the ever-present erotic: where to place the women while doing push-ups and sit-ups in physical training? Management had to take time to consider the privacy of women as men on the ground could look up the shorts of the women in front of them. The women were nonchalant. Brodie proudly reports that the commander's concern for the women's modesty exceeded their own.

The fight to assimilate women at VMI is over. But the larger battle of placing women on submarines and in the infantry is still ahead. Now that America is suddenly involved in a real war, the question of coed combat is no longer academic.

During World War II, the American flag was raised on the conquered island of Iwo Jima. The six men lined up "nuts to butts," as they used to say at VMI before gendered language was eliminated, and lifted Old Glory, made even heavier by a stiff wind. Describing the emotional scene, James Bradley, writing in *Flags of Our Fathers*, highlighted a little-noted moment captured forever in the famous Rosenthal photograph. As the flagpole was manhandled and moved to the vertical by Sergeant Mike Strank, his hand drops to the wrist of the man before him and seems to steady, to encourage, helping to push the flag upward. The grasp is that of a brother.

There is no mistaking Sergeant Strank's hand on his fellow soldier. It would never be grounds for sexual harassment, never be party to a lawsuit, never be a scandal. It was ten thousand years of the brotherhood of soldiers, in the mud fighting for the girl back home. Today, "brothers" who fight together must first ask for permission before they touch.

Sergeant Strank was killed in action a few days later. ◆

Charmaine Crouse Yoest is an instructor at the University of Virginia; her great-grandfather was one of VMI's builders. Jack Yoest, a former captain in the Army, is a management consultant.

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If Your Guest Drinks from the Finger Bowl

Charlotte Allen says great hostesses don't just throw parties—they uphold standards.

I like Sally Quinn. Yes, *that* Sally Quinn, the onetime party-beat reporter who married her boss at the *Washington Post*, Ben "Watergate" Bradlee. The Sally Quinn who whined in the op-ed pages from time to time during the Reagan-Bush Neglect years, and then spent the better part of the mid-nineties trying to get Hillary Clinton over for lunch at her Georgetown mansion. The author of those god-awful novels *Regrets Only* and *Daughter of Regrets Only* (or whatever it was called—both books are out of print, so it's hard to check) that a sadistic book editor made me review some years ago for the *Washington Times*. My reviews of those power suit-busters weren't as clever as Christopher Buckley's in the *New Yorker* (he coined a genre for them: "cliterature"), but like him, I had to wade resentfully through many steamy, name-dropping (lunch spots, political celebrities, designer clothes) pages about the sex lives of glamorous and desirable female Washington journalists and the jut-jawed but compassionate, straight-Democratic-ticket hunks who loved them.

But I like Sally, nonetheless. There's a reason: Sometime between the Bush *père* and the Bush *fils* administrations, she dropped her Jane Austen aspirations (at least I hope she has), became a TV talking-head fixture, but only on such topics as what kind of tie Al Gore ought to wear, and held forth on an all-important topic: the Washington hostess. In fact, in a 1997 book, *The Party: A Guide to Adventurous Entertaining*, Sally came out of the guest-coat closet as a Washington hostess: "You can call me a hostess anytime," she wrote proudly. A manual of advice to those who would, like Sally, entertain with panache, *The Party* was a wonderful book and a best seller, deservedly so (it, unlike the novels, is still in print as a $12 Fireside Books paperback that can be found in nearly every bookstore and is worth every penny). In the pages of *The Party*, Sally revealed herself to be what she truly is underneath that veneer of Hillary-stroking and limo-feminism: a dyed-in-the-wool conservative.

That is because Sally Quinn's *forté* is the giving of advice on manners, mores, and ultimately, morals—the most profoundly conservative profession on earth. She is one of the keepers of the social order: that unwritten, formally unenforceable superstructure of traditions, subtle sanctions, and small kindnesses that make the difference between civilization and raw barbarity. Not surprisingly, when Sally began criticizing the Clintons for gaucherie during the last years of that administration—now why would anyone do that?—many liberals turned on her. Media critic Harry Jaffe wrote a particularly nasty column about her for *Salon* in 1998, calling her "mean-spirited," "elitist," a "witch," and an "apologist for independent counsel Kenneth Starr."

Sally's bedrock conservatism underneath those liberal layers has much to do with her upbringing. Both her parents exemplified a culture of tradition and of formal and informal hospitality—that is to say, they were both from the South. Her mother grew up in Savannah, Georgia, and her father on Maryland's Eastern Shore. In addition, her father was a three-star general who not only handed down a sense of starch and protocol to his daughter but hobnobbed with some of the most conservative of the Republican politicians of the 1960s: Barry Goldwater and Richard Nixon, among others.

In fact, it was Barry Goldwater, Jr., who launched Sally Quinn's career as a party-giver during the late 1960s. To celebrate his election to Congress, Sally bought herself a pair of lace evening pajamas, invited 200 friends over, and got in the society pages. The next day, Bradlee called her up out of the blue and hired her to cover parties for the *Washington Post*. As Sally narrates it in *The Party*, her guest list seems to consist mostly of liberals—Norman Lear, Carl Bernstein, Warren Beatty, Hodding Carter—but she has also counted such staunch conservatives as William Safire and the late Rowland Evans among her close friends.

In *The Party*, Quinn's primary aim is to disabuse those among her readers who believe that etiquette is about knowing which fork to use or where to seat the guest of honor's wife or whether it is appropriate to wear a tuxedo at an afternoon wedding. Learning such rules is helpful, because they con-

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tribute to the general sense of decorum and prevent one from feeling, and often acting, offensively out of place—but they are not at the heart of etiquette. Nor is the point of etiquette to impress your guests with how much you know and they don't about, say, wines or stemware or snail eating.

WHAT ETIQUETTE IS ABOUT, simply, is concern for other people. Sally says it over and over: "The most important thing you can do as a host or hostess is to make your guests feel comfortable, welcome, wanted." "Wouldn't you rather have a great meatloaf and mashed potatoes than some badly done squiggly quenelles or a soggy beef Wellington with the hostess hell-bent on impressing everyone with how good a cook she is?" "If you're going to have your kids appear at your grown-up parties, for God's sake don't make them perform." "Never cancel to accept a better offer." "Parties are about people, not about things."

Thus, you don't need a big, fancy house to entertain: Guests actually feel cozier and more festive when you cram them into a small space. Just treat them hospitably. Don't throw a cocktail party during the dinner hour, and then try to save money by having your wait-staff dole out parsimonious scraps of canapés in slow-mo—Sally hates that. Ditto in spades for scrimping on the booze (serve beer or modestly priced wine if that's all you can afford, but make sure there's plenty of it). Try not to seat any guest between two known bores (and if you're a guest and you don't like whom you're seated next to, don't switch the place cards). And don't commit the even worse crime of seating your celebrity guests (along with yourself) at one table and their spouses and the "B" guests at another.

This is the stuff that *The Party* is made of. One of Sally's favorite stories, perhaps apocryphal, concerns a dinner guest who had never seen a finger bowl before and so started drinking out of his. So as not to embarrass, the host picked up his own finger bowl and drank out of it, too. Another of her favorites concerns her father, invited to a British admiral's house for a black-tie dinner. After the main course, Gen. Quinn lit up one of the cigarettes that had been placed on the table along with ashtrays, as was the custom thirty years ago. The admiral thundered from the other end of the table, "General, in my house, we do not smoke until after the sweet." "Admiral," her father replied in an equally loud voice, "in my house, a guest can do no wrong."

The point is that etiquette has a moral purpose: treating others, all others with whom you come into contact, with kindness, courtesy, and respect for their dignity as human beings. You don't behave one way toward the people you are trying to impress and another way toward the people you don't think you need to impress. When that unwritten rule prevails, so does a civilized order that needs few legal sanctions for enforcement. This is a deeply conservative concept, conservative in the Burkean sense. And Sally Quinn, by making this principle the heart of her book, cannot be anything other than conservative, no matter what her avowed political beliefs may be.

One of the grandes dames of contemporary etiquette, Judith Martin, constantly reiterates these principles in her "Miss Manners" syndicated column and her numerous guidebooks for the etiquette-ly perplexed. Martin does not confuse good manners with Miss Grundyism. (It is impolite to inquire closely about the sleeping arrangements of the unmarried or the brief lapse of time, if any, between the wedding and the birth of the eldest child.) Nor does she confuse it with snobbish-

"Now don't word the invitation in such a way that they'll feel that they have to accept."

Drawing by Garrett Price

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ness. "That social climbers and twits have misused etiquette throughout history should not be used as an argument for doing away with it," she writes in *Miss Manners Rescues Civilization.*

But as Martin points out in the same book, there would be no need for sexual harassment laws, for example, if bosses obeyed these two fundamental rules of workplace etiquette: A gentleman should "never even seem to notice that the colleague he treats in a professional manner is a lady," and "Pestering a lady is ungentlemanly." There would be no need for campus bans against date-rape if college guys obeyed this fundamental rule of courtship: A gentleman should never assume that the lady he is with, no matter how impulsive her behavior, "has dispensed with the formality of consenting to what was once considered an act of marriage." A society whose members have a strongly ingrained sense of formality and symbolism with regard to other people is a society of limited government.

It is also a society, as the examples above indicate, that tends to reinforce fundamentally conservative attitudes toward sexual behavior, a realm in which the potential for mistreating others is ubiquitous. Carolyn Hax, who writes an advice column for the under-thirty crowd, "Tell Me About It," for the *Washington Post*, seems on the surface to be the anti-Miss Manners: Her style is in-your-face, not *faux* nineteenth century like Martin's. And she purports to be a sworn enemy of "Rules girls" Ellen Fein and Sherrie Schneider, whose 1996 book, *The Rules*, advised such old-fashioned husband-snagging strategies as not calling him before he calls you and refusing to accept offers made after Wednesday for Saturday night dates (Hax says it's okay to strike up conversations with opposite-sex acquaintances in pickup bars).

But when it comes to the nuts and bolts of relationships, what Hax proposes sound a lot like, well, rules: Don't cling, don't be a doormat, don't put up with any kind of verbal abuse. And here is what she has to say about premarital sex in her new book, *Tell Me About It: Lying, Sulking, and Getting Fat and 56 Other Things Not to Do While Looking for Love*: "Before anyone's pants come off, all women should assume they'll get pregnant and all men should assume the woman will want to keep the baby. Everyone can work backward from there." Does that sound conservative, or what? It is not surprising to learn that Hax, for all her purported hipness, hails from a traditional family, with still-married parents and three sisters, and has been happily married herself for six years. In other parts of the book, Hax promotes courtesy, fairness, kindness, and loyalty to one's friends. Her message is not unlike that of Sally Quinn.

In her introduction to *The Party*, Quinn writes: "Just follow the Golden Rule: 'Do unto others.' Treat your guests the way you would like to be treated. It's as simple as that." Comparing guidelines for successful entertaining to a religious precept sounds overweening, but it's not. That is partly because hospitality embodies by its very nature a sacred duty to honor and care for our fellow human beings. But it is mostly because the rules of etiquette are the pillars of civilized and moral existence. Those who pass on those rules, like Sally Quinn and her fellow etiquette arbiters, are society's true conservators. ◆

Charlotte Allen is a writer living in Washington.

KARLYN BOWMAN'S

Poll-Pourri

Killer Kids

Should kids who commit violent crimes be tried as adults? The public seems to be coming to the conclusion that they should. In 1981, when CBS News and the *New York Times* asked whether minors who are accused of committing violent crimes should be tried in the same court as adult offenders, 32 percent said they should but 61 percent said they should be tried in a juvenile court.

When CBS News asked a similar question in 1998, however, 58 percent said they should be tried in adult courts and only 28 percent in juvenile court. A Gallup question asked in 2000 found that two-thirds felt that juveniles between the ages of fourteen and seventeen, who commit violent crimes, should be handled in the criminal justice system, and 24 percent said they should be given more lenient treatment in juvenile courts. One percent volunteered that they should be given tougher treatment; 10 percent had no opinion.

Not Far from the Tree

Should parents be punished for the sins of their children? Americans seem to want to get tougher with the parents of children who commit crimes with guns. Around 60 percent told Zogby interviewers that parents should be held legally responsible when a juvenile commits a crime with a gun. The numbers are even higher if the child used a parent's gun. ◆

Karlyn Bowman is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

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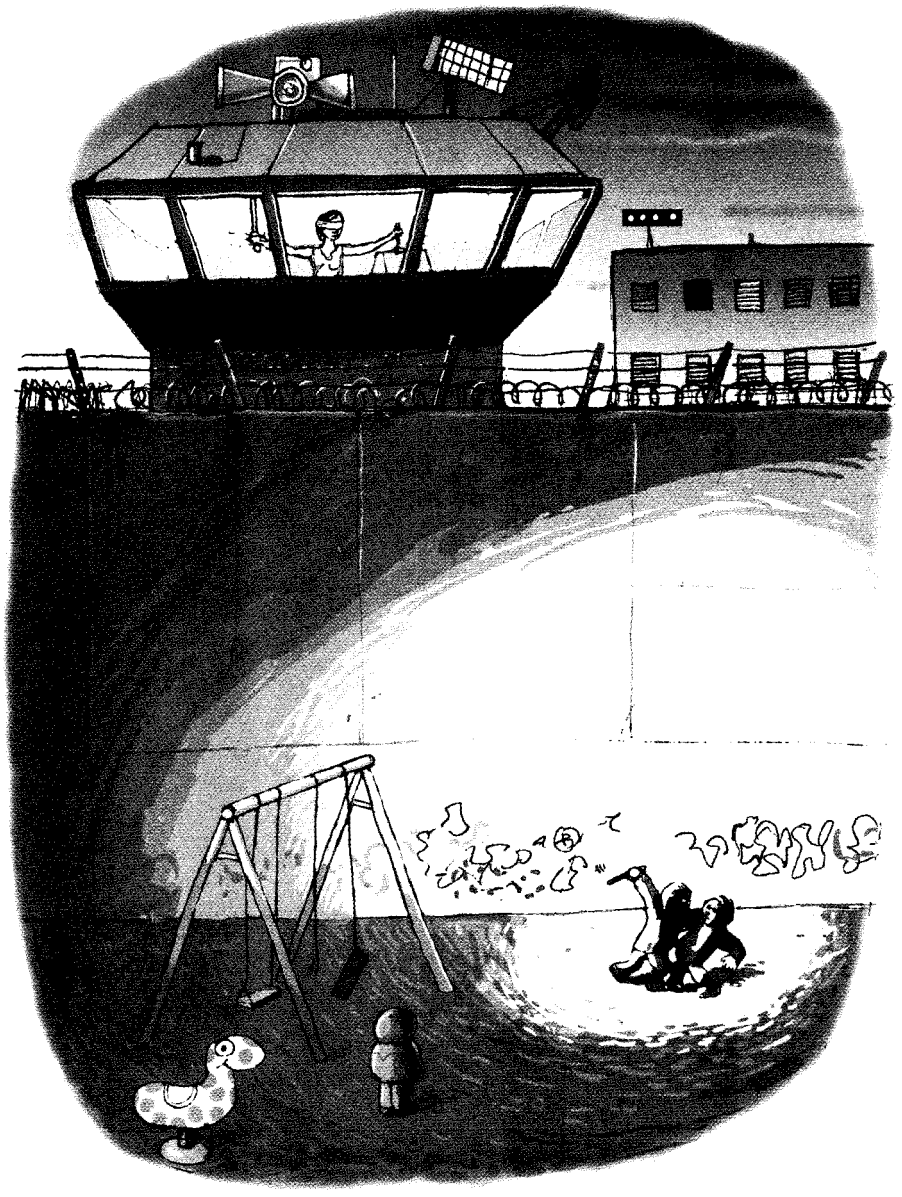
Old Enough to Kill

Should teen killers be tried as adults? *Christine Stolba* looks to history for some answers.



FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD Nathaniel Brazill sat quietly in his starched khaki shirt and neatly knotted black tie. Wreathed in baby fat, wearing a quizzical expression, the Florida teenager was on trial for murder as an adult.

A spate of recent cases involving young killers—among them mop-topped Californian Andy Williams, fifteen, who took a gun to school and killed two classmates, and Lionel Tate, another Florida teen, who pummeled a six-year-old neighbor to death—has renewed debate about the way courts treat juvenile offenders and the effectiveness of our separate juvenile justice system.

Should the courts treat children the same way they treat adults? Are children capable of understanding the full import of their actions and do they deserve a shot at rehabilitation? And is the juvenile justice system capable of dealing with minors who commit truly heinous crimes?

Juvenile court is a fairly recent development. An offender who lived in the eighteenth century and was seven or older would, in all likelihood, have been treated as an adult by the courts. At that time, the law considered children under the age of seven as lacking full moral capacity and incapable of giving consent. Once children reached the age of seven, however, the courts didn't hesitate to mete out harsh punishments. According to University of Richmond law professor Robert E. Shepherd, who has studied the history of juvenile justice, before 1900, at least ten children were executed in the U.S. for crimes they committed before they were fourteen.

In the nineteenth century, reformers, concerned about the bad effects on children being imprisoned with adult criminals—the "contamination of incorrigible adults," as one put it—formed organizations such as the Society for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, which in 1825 opened a house of refuge in New York to rehabilitate juvenile offenders. The goal of these facilities, which were privately owned, was to rehabilitate and educate youthful delinquents, on the theory that children and adolescents were more capable of reformation than adults. At the same time, reformers believed that children had less moral capacity than adults and thus shouldn't

Drawing by Charles Jaffé

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be held to the same standards of culpability. Delinquent children in these houses of refuge performed day labor, toiling at tasks such as tailoring and silver plating, according to Shepherd.

Groups such as the New York Children's Aid Society, which was established in 1853, carried on similar activities. The society, founded by the Rev. Charles Loring Brace, played a preventive role by targeting at-risk urban youth—usually vagrant and abused children—rather than criminal and delinquent kids. The Aid Society's rescued rascals were shipped off to farms and small towns out west to prevent them from embarking on a life of crime.

By century's end, however, a new breed of reformer began criticizing these private children's homes, particularly as the facilities evolved from small houses of refuge into larger reformatories that resembled adult prisons, losing their rehabilitation role in the process.

In an effort to combat these conditions, reformers turned to state governments. Their first success came in 1899, when the first state juvenile court convened in Chicago. The court was the product of years of activism by Progressive era reformers who believed that the focus of juvenile justice should not be on innocence or guilt, but on education, rehabilitation, and the protection of children, particularly those who found themselves in less-than-ideal family situations. Underpinning the juvenile court was the doctrine of *parens patriae*—the state as benevolent parent.

Most of the crimes brought before the juvenile judge in the early days were a far cry from the violent murders we see kids committing today. In her memoir, *Twenty Years at Hull House*, early twentieth-century settlement house worker Jane Addams wrote of how she and her fellow Progressives in Chicago had become "distressed by the gangs of very little boys who would sally forth with an enterprising leader" in search of houses to plunder, often using the proceeds from their thefts to "buy cigarettes and beer or even candy, which could be conspicuously consumed in the alleys where they might enjoy the excitement of being seen and suspected by the 'coppers.'"

By 1925, forty-six states had some form of juvenile justice system that exercised original jurisdiction over criminal offenses involving children under the age of eighteen. Juvenile courts were characterized by less formal hearings, often without lawyers, and greater discretion in determining punishment and treatment. The new juvenile courts usually provided greater privacy protections than regular criminal courts, sealing the records of child offenders. The informality of the court proceedings and the procedural latitude granted the judges was meant to put children at ease; it also, not surprisingly, succeeded in eliciting many confessions from children who became comfortable divulging all to their "friend," the judge.

This Progressive era treatment model—"rehabilitation through individualized justice," as reformers called it—continued to hold the support of the juvenile justice community during the thirties and forties. But beginning in the 1950s and reaching full flower in the 1960s, juvenile courts became the object of harsh criticism. From the right came cries that juvenile courts were too soft on crime; from the left came an even more vociferous attack. These critics contended that the courts failed to provide juvenile offenders with basic rights to due process.

Eventually the questions surrounding the effectiveness and scope of the juvenile court system reached the U.S. Supreme Court. Two cases in particular proved seminal: *Kent v. United States* (1966) and *In re Gault* (1967). In the *Kent* case, the Court ruled that the juvenile defendant, sixteen-year-old Morris Kent, who was accused of rape and robbery, had been denied basic constitutional rights by the juvenile court. In the *Gault* case, the Court further weakened the principle of *parens patriae* when it found that the juvenile court in Arizona had violated fifteen-year-old old Gerald Gault's Fourteenth Amendment right to due process. Young Gault, accused of making lewd telephone calls to a neighbor, was not provided with legal counsel.

Congress weighed in as well by passing the Juvenile Delinquency Prevention and Control Act of 1968, which recommended that nonviolent, noncriminal juvenile offenders (those arrested for infractions such as truancy) be handled by agencies other than the courts. By the 1970s, according to the Department of Justice, "community-based programs, diversion, and deinstitutionalization" were the hallmarks of juvenile justice policy. Most states also enacted laws providing that juvenile offenders be kept separate from adult offenders while serving their sentences.

Although many of the changes were initially viewed as positive, their long-term effects have not been. Author Kay Hymowitz has argued that, in the wake of the *Gault* decision, juvenile courts ended up focusing more on technical legalisms than on their original mission of rehabilitating individual children. "For all its considerable faults," Hymowitz argued in *Ready or Not: Why Treating Children as Small Adults Endangers Their Future—and Ours*, "the old juvenile court was designed so that all adults—parents, teachers, judges—were in a conspiracy to teach adoles-

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cents their moral and civic responsibilities. *Gault* forced that conspiracy to disband."

THE CONSPIRACY of the well-meaning adult world is now near extinction. Jane Addams recalled her success in convincing "the firms manufacturing moving picture films not only [to] submit their films to a volunteer inspection committee," but also to encourage the "five-cent theaters" to sponsor "entertaining" and "instructive" lectures on "the subject of public health and morals." Nowadays, as Tipper Gore's music lyrics crusade and New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani's "decency" commission revealed, adults can't even agree on standards of public morality.

Juvenile courts faced another challenge in the late 1980s and early 1990s: rising juvenile murder rates that led to greater public concern over the effectiveness of the juvenile courts.

The serious nature of some juvenile crimes also led to a partial reversal of what had been achieved by the Progressive reformers. There was a movement to "waive" certain youths back to adult court. By the 1990s, the movement to try juveniles who committed particularly repugnant crimes as adults had gained momentum. According to the Department of Justice, between 1992 and 1997, all but three states amended their laws to make it easier to try juvenile offenders in regular criminal court, to apply adult sentencing requirements to juveniles, and to remove some of the confidentiality provisions of the juvenile court system.

After the sentencing of Nathaniel Brazill (he was convicted of second-degree murder), the nonprofit organization Sentencing Project, which opposes trying children as adults, asked, "What does it say about the U.S. that we are ready to give up on some of our children and use the tragic events which overtake a few of them as a basis for denying them the opportunity to mature and grow into responsible adults, unhampered by a criminal record and the trauma of prison life?" *Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen tried to gin up sympathy for Brazill in a column recounting his own childish pranks. His goal was "to remind us all that kids are kids and to suggest that even the worst of them—even the ones who commit murder—are still kids."

Indeed, many juvenile advocates argue that teen killers often don't understand the magnitude or consequences of their crimes. A thirteen-year-old on trial this year for the brutal murder (committed with three other teens) of sixty-four-year old Jerry Heimann in Everett, Washington, was described by one reporter as "wide-eyed and a little bewildered" during court proceedings.

But sympathy has proven difficult to sustain in an era when often unrepentant children commit grisly murders. Public outrage recently reached a fever pitch in England, when two eighteen-year-olds—who had kidnapped and brutally murdered a toddler when they were ten years old—were released on parole. Like the infamous case of English teen killer Mary Bell, who in 1968 was convicted of murdering two younger children when she was eleven years old, the two parolees were given new identities and forbidden to return to their hometown.

National data on the number of juvenile cases tried in adult criminal court in the U.S. do not exist, but the Department of Justice reports that the state of Florida grants approximately 5,000 such transfers annually, for example. But there is a reason these children are handled like dangerous criminals: They are dangerous. The Bureau of Justice Statistics data on juvenile offenders reveal that of the approximately 7,000 juveniles serving time in adult prisons, more than half of them are doing so for violent crimes. And these are not twelve-year-old babes in the woods—76 percent of them are seventeen or eighteen years old.

It is also worth recalling that the juvenile justice system has always used the regular criminal courts as a safety valve for the most violent and recalcitrant juvenile offenders. Sanford Fox, who has written about the early juvenile courts, notes that adult courts were used "as a sentencing option in children's cases, both before and after the advent of juvenile court." Even the original juvenile court in Chicago remanded thirty-seven boys to the adult criminal court in its first year of operation.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY, with its victim culture, its eager embrace of therapy, and its overly optimistic belief in the powers of social engineering, finds distasteful the idea that some people—and especially children—choose not to change. To be sure, many juvenile offenders are the products of very troubled and abusive environments, and the state still has a responsibility to rescue such children—as the Progressives urged nearly a century ago.

But in assessing the current state of juvenile justice it is also useful to remember the comments of the attorney for the recently paroled Robert Thompson, one of the British boys who murdered the toddler. Writing in London's *Sunday Times*, he admitted that Thompson was "the only child I have ever met who frightened me." ◆

Christine Stolba is a senior fellow at the Independent Women's Forum.

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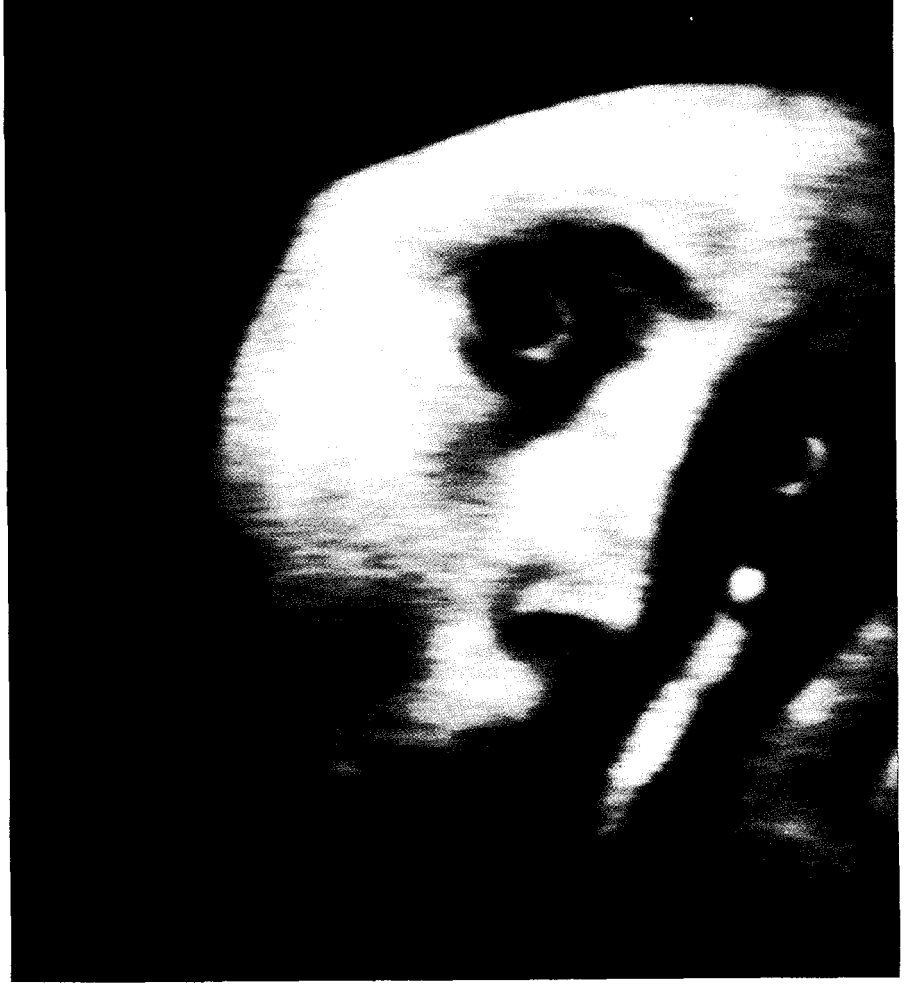
When the Bough Breaks

Child protective services took little Candace Elmore from her mother. A few years later the little girl died in a bizarre "rebirthing" ritual. ***Kathleen Parker*** reports on the Kafkaesque experiences of two families.



From a photo by Roman Vishniac

AT FIRST GLANCE, Angela Elmore and Mary Ann Stumbo have little in common except that they both live in North Carolina. Elmore is a poor, marginally educated single mother with a history of bad relationships and hand-to-mouth jobs. Stumbo is a middle-class, well-educated, married mother whose architect-husband provides for his family while she home schools their four children.

It's hard to imagine any two people whose lives would be less likely to intersect, yet Elmore and Stumbo have more in common than most of us do. Both have had life-altering encounters with North Carolina's child protective services.

In Elmore's case, the encounter is best described as life-shattering, as her child, Candace, ended up dead after social workers removed her from Elmore's care and handed her over for adoption and a "better" life to an eccentric heiress, who in turn sent the child to New Age therapists. Candace, who was ten, died rolled up in a blanket and suffocated by adults who were "rebirthing" her in a bizarre attempt to make her love her adoptive mother more, and, imagine this, stop missing her real mom.

Stumbo's encounter, thanks probably to her relative affluence, greater sophistication, and the kind of support system of which Elmore could only dream, seems headed for a saner ending. She and her husband, James, have taken their case to the N.C. Supreme Court, defending themselves against charges that they interfered with a state investigation of alleged child abuse or neglect. The evidence against them? Their two-year-old daughter ran into the front yard naked for a couple of minutes in the early morning as she went looking for her kitten.

Both cases, though representing ex-

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tremes in the debate regarding child protection versus parental rights, are frightening to citizens mindful of the increasingly draconian measures state agents are willing and entitled by law to take in response to concerns about child abuse. Between a laissez-faire policy that turns a blind eye to abuse by parents and the nightmare that was little Candace's life and horrific death, or the legal quagmire that characterizes the Stumbos' struggle for constitutional protections, is a commonsense middle ground that desperately needs discovering.

Candace Elmore apologized before dying. "I'm sorry," she said to her adult tormentors before she finally drew her last breath. She was sorry that she wasn't able to provide for her therapists whatever reward they sought. We know this because her therapists—recently convicted of reckless child abuse resulting in death and each sentenced to sixteen years in prison—filmed their sessions with Candace.

The death scene followed two weeks of abuse during which Candace was to be deconstructed and "re-educated." Sort of like the Marine Corps, except that Candace was just ten years old and she didn't sign up. Her adoptive mother, Jeane Newmaker, an unmarried Durham, North Carolina, woman, volunteered her to this duty and paid $7,000 for an unlicensed therapist to "rebirth" Candace so that the child would stop her annoying pining for Elmore and form a stronger attachment to Newmaker, who was present during the fatal session.

Some of the clever techniques involved in this so-called therapy, all designed to make the victim feel vulnerable and therefore emotionally pliable, include shouting, insulting, touching in intimate ways, and "holding." In one 160-minute session, she reportedly had her face grabbed 90 times, was shaken or bounced 309 times, threatened 49 times, and shouted at 65 times. Having tortured the child emotionally, the women then commenced a series of physical punishments that, if administered to an animal, would get a human arrested or shot by a decent neighbor.

First came "compression therapy," during which Candace's adoptive mother lay on top of Candace and licked her face. Anyone still puzzled at this child's failure to bond? Next came the "rebirthing," designed to recreate the physical experience of being born. The therapists wrapped Candace in a navy, flannel blanket and sat on her, bounced, and pushed to simulate contractions and birthing.

Mind you, these therapists—Connell Watkins and Julie Ponder—weren't precisely poster girls for anorexia. Their weights, combined with the weight of two other helpers called in for Candace's final torture, came to about 670 pounds. Candace weighed seventy pounds, which accounts for her vomiting and losing bowel control.

Despite her persistent pleas for air, the adults continued bouncing and pushing. After sixteen minutes of this, Candace told the women that she was going to die, to which they replied: "Go ahead and die." Candace's next words were: "You mean, like you want me to die for real?" The answer was: "Yes, go ahead and die right now."

Unfortunately, Candace couldn't die just yet. She had another twenty-five minutes to go before she uttered her last word, "No," whereupon Ponder mocked her: "Quitter, quitter, quitter, quitter! Quit, quit, quit, quit. She's a quitter!"

When Watkins and Ponder finally unwrapped the child thirty minutes later, Candace was of course dead. By the time she died, she hadn't seen her real mother, Angela Elmore, since she was six years old.

Angela Elmore doesn't claim to have been a perfect parent. She and her husband, Candace's father, weren't able to provide a stable home. Maybe it was because Angela herself had been a foster child throughout her childhood, giving birth to Candace when she was just eighteen. Maybe it was because Angela's mother, Mary, had been a foster child, abandoned on a West Virginia street corner by her own mother before she was school age.

Candace's father couldn't hold down a job and pawned everything from his wife's wedding ring to Candace's high chair to make ends meet. Candace's parents also had a history of domestic trouble. Sheriff's deputies in Lincoln County, where the Elmores lived, had responded to several calls from the Elmore home.

We don't know what kind of parents they were—child protective records are sealed—but extended family members made no mention of abuse during interviews following Candace's death. Candace's step-grandfather, a mechanic with the N.C. Department of Transportation, said there were instances of neglect, but the children were always fed, clothed, and housed. Candace's grandmother, Mary, said the children were loved.

In any event, we can at least safely wager that, had she remained with her mother, Candace would not have been stuck in a blanket and pounced on by four adults until she threw up and died. Yet, few would have objected to state intervention in Candace's case. Her life seemed doomed to the same cycles as her mother and grandmother. They were poor besides. What better than a fresh start in a nice house with all the comforts of a rising-yuppie childhood?

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First came "compression therapy," during which Candace's adoptive mother lay on top of Candace and licked her face. Anyone still puzzled at this child's failure to bond?

Here's a radical thought: How about the love of one's own mother? Although poor and imperfect, with limited resources, Angela Elmore loved her children and wanted to do better by them. When she was pregnant with Candace, Angela played classical music and read aloud because she'd heard that her child would be smarter that way. When social workers finally took Candace and her siblings from Angela, the two girls had to be wrenched from their mother's arms. (No one will say where the other two children ended up.)

Such horror stories lend justification to the Stumbos' reaction during their relatively minor skirmish two years ago with another North Carolina social worker. No one died. The social worker who came to their house, Tasha Lowery, was just trying to follow up on an anonymous tip that a toddler was naked alone in the front yard.

WHAT good citizen wouldn't inquire or, lacking the fortitude to make a personal call, pick up the phone and notify authorities? Minding one's own business is a rule best ignored when a child's life may be in danger. How was anyone to know that the naked child unattended in a front yard of a house on a dead-end street wasn't in peril?

Once a call is made, the department of social services has no choice but to follow up with an inquiry, which is what Tasha Lowery did. She knocked on the Stumbos' door, spoke to Mrs. Stumbo, saw all four children and, by her subsequent testimony, found them to be safe and well-cared for. At this point, it seems that anyone with a thimbleful of common sense would have said, "Sorry to bother you; have a good day."

But Lowery persisted in asking for private interviews with each of the children, a request Mrs. Stumbo declined. Instead, she called an attorney with the Home School Legal Defense Association, which offers legal advice to its members. The attorney, Scott Somerville, called a halt to Lowery's inquiry, whereupon the Stumbos were charged with obstructing an investigation.

In the ensuing two years, Somerville has been working with the Stumbos to challenge what he believes is the state's violation of the Fourth Amendment, which protects citizens against unreasonable search and seizure. Somerville has argued that Lowery, in requesting private interviews with the Stumbo children, in effect would have been "seizing" the children against the parents' will and without sufficient cause.

While the Stumbos and Somerville look forward to a state supreme court hearing sometime in the next few months, none want an outcome that could be misused to protect child abusers, they say. Their hope is that social workers will be recognized as "state agents" and be bound, as police are, by constitutional guidelines.

As currently forged, child protective laws endow social workers—who may be ill-trained, inexperienced, or bereft of common sense—with inordinate power over private citizens. In all states, social workers can call the police to have children removed from their homes on the spot. They're only supposed to do this in an emergency, but who decides what constitutes an emergency?

Imagine if Tasha Lowery had come to your door and wanted to take your two-year-old aside and question her about home life. Lowery may be a delightful person, but she's not a psychologist. She has a bachelor's degree in social work, and her training for the job that brought her to the Stumbos' house consisted of a couple of dozen hours by the state's Department of Child Protective Services.

She might have decided that Mrs. Stumbo's reluctance to let her interview her children suggested guilt of some fantastical injury—an "emergency"—and insisted on removing the children.

Meanwhile, parents know that improperly framed questions can impart or suggest information that is both inappropriate for children and may qualify as a form of abuse in itself. But where do you draw the line? You don't ignore a naked toddler alone in a yard; you don't ignore children who may be suffering from neglect amid poverty. But you also don't unnecessarily invade a family's privacy, or remove a child based on assumptions that material wealth has more value than mere maternal love.

Fear of cruelty was the impetus behind the well-intended child protection movement that picked up steam in 1973 with passage of the Mondale Act, or the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, which provides federal funding for child abuse investigations. In exchange for some part of $4.5 billion in federal Medicaid dollars, states are required to install a hotline system to accept anonymous tips that also require mandatory investigation. Cozily, once a child is removed from a home, more federal dollars start flowing.

"As soon as I take a kid out of a

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home, I begin to earn federal money for the cost of caring for that child," Gary Stangler, former director of Missouri's Department of Social Services, told journalist Bill Moyers a few years back. "All of the federal incentives are on the institutional side."

While tipsters can anonymously create havoc in a family's life, there are no checks and balances on the callers themselves. Sometimes those tips may save a life; other times they can destroy a life. Abuse of the system in hostile divorces over child custody issues has become widespread.

Since 1985, meanwhile, the foster care population has more than doubled, a figure that belies the contention that child protective agents work hard to keep families together. The contrary would seem to be true. Richard Wexler, executive director of the National Coalition for Child Protection Reform, sums up the problem this way:

"The ethos guiding child welfare from its very inception boils down to 'take the child and run.' Once taken, they languish in foster care not because agencies do too much for parents, but because they do almost nothing. The children are filed away and forgotten as overwhelmed workers rush on to the next case. And all of this makes children less safe."

The more workers are overwhelmed —and wasting time and resources on cases like the Stumbos'—the less time those workers have to find children in real danger, says Wexler.

Often children—perhaps even Candace—are removed from homes in cases of poverty rather than when justified by abuse or serious neglect. Research has shown that children who might be viewed by more affluent, stable individuals as endangered do better with their own parents than in foster care for the very peculiar reason that they love and need their own moms and dads.

Wexler cites a University of Florida study of "crack babies." One group of newborns was placed in foster care, another with birth mothers able to care for them. After one year, the babies were tested for infant development—rolling over, sitting up, and reaching out. Consistently, the babies who were with their mothers performed better.

No one's suggesting that newborns be handed over to crack-addicted mothers who can't care for them, but the study does suggest that we may be undervaluing the power of parental love. Again, we don't know the circumstances of Candace's removal from her home, but clearly the child's heart was broken by the loss of her family. What could be crueler than wrenching a six-year-old child from her mother and giving her away to a stranger? Oh, yeah, killing her.

The Stumbo case has the potential to set an important precedent, giving parents more power to protect their families from state intrusion. Somerville insists that social workers are state agents and as such must be bound by constitutional restraints. Among other things, except in cases of emergency, social workers should have to demonstrate probable cause before insisting on private interviews with children or home searches.

Other observers of the child abuse-neglect debacle point to practical, commonsense solutions. In his new book on false allegations of child abuse, *Elusive Innocence*, Dean Tong outlines strategies for private citizens. Though he doesn't recommend that people like the Stumbos deny social workers access, he does insist on electronic recording of interviews and copious note-taking by parents. He also suggests a change from anonymous to confidential tips in reporting suspected abuse or neglect.

Wexler is working for a system-wide overhaul that refocuses the emphasis on family preservation rather than child removal and foster care. In too many cases, he says, children are removed when the family's immediate problem might be solved with education, counseling, or a cash advance.

He cites a case in Orange County, California, in which an impoverished mother of three had no one to watch her children while she worked at night. When she left her eight-, six-, and four-year-old children alone in a motel—the only housing she could afford—someone called child protective services, and the children were seized on the spot. A little child-care help might have been a less traumatic—and ultimately less costly—solution.

In states where family preservation is the model for child welfare—Michigan, Washington, and Alabama lead the way—the foster care population has been radically reduced and children are reportedly safer. Most successful among these is Alabama, which has been rebuilding its child welfare system with an emphasis on keeping families together. In the twenty-one counties that have completed the conversion, the foster care population has been reduced by 33 percent and a court-ordered study found that children are safer than before the system changes.

Judging from recent events—and this may be the first time the following words have been written about anything other than football—North Carolina could take a lesson from Alabama. This much is owed to the memory of Candace Tiara Elmore. ◆

Kathleen Parker is a syndicated columnist and lives in South Carolina.

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Fifty Years On

As Elizabeth II approaches her Golden Jubilee, *Michael M. Thomas* utters a heartfelt "God save the Queen!"

Setting foot on English soil for the first time as Queen and in mourning for her father, George VI, Her Majesty is accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh.

IN THE VERY SMALL HOURS of November 20, 1947, our Scots governess, Miss Cameron, awakened my brother and me in the Park Avenue apartment where we lived with our father. Quietly, so as not to disturb anyone else in the apartment, Miss Cameron tuned our radio to CBS, which was broadcasting—in conjunction with a BBC feed—the wedding in Westminster Abbey of Princess Elizabeth to Lt. Philip Mountbatten, RN.

I can hear it again now, almost fifty-five years later, as if it were yesterday: the squawks and crackles that characterized overseas broadcasts back then, the distinctive Bond Street voice of David Dimbleby, the BBC's man of choice for sovereign occasions, the faint background roar of the crowds lining the processional route, the florid descriptions of the splendid get-up of the attendant lords and ladies, this being the first time since the war that the British aristocracy had turned out in full fig, in tiaras and ermines—and above all I remember the bride's voice, very small and very English as she repeated the vows spoken by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

It was odd and disheartening to hear. Like most boys with an over-gorged romantic bent, an aching yearning centered largely on the girl of my pubescent dreams, Princess Ozma of Oz, the thought that "my" Princess Elizabeth, almost to the day exactly ten years older than myself, was going off with this dashing officer, with his sharpened Leslie Howard good looks, was hardly bearable. I may even have shed a tear. Miss Cameron, loyalest of subjects, did.

Four years and some months later, "as she sat on the platform of the Tree Tops Hotel [in Kenya] in the branches of a giant wild fig tree watching and photographing the animals at the salt-lick," in the words of her biographer, Sarah Bradford, Princess Elizabeth was disturbed in her wildlife contemplation by her husband with the news that her father, King George VI, had died at Sandringham, the royal vacation home in Norfolk, and that she was now, by the grace of God, of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith, and ruler of Dominions and Possessions beyond the seas.

In February she will mark her fiftieth year on the throne. She will not be the first queen of England to celebrate such a Jubilee, a consideration that brings to my mind verses that—like Her Majesty—also date well back in my personal remembrance of things past. The romantic urge that nearly convulsed me when I listened to the princess's wedding never really died out—to this day it hasn't—and so I was a ready and willing victim when, at about the age of sixteen, I was introduced at prep school to the manly, combative sentimentality of A.E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad.*

Thanks to Tom Stoppard's *The Invention of Love,* Housman is once again cultural news, but few people, I imagine, still read him closely enough to recall the ironic yet patriotic anthem to

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Queen Victoria with which he begins *A Shropshire Lad*, the book of poems that is his purchase on immortality. I'm going to repeat it in full here, because it seems to me to provide much, much to think about as another glorious queen approaches her Golden Jubilee:

From Clee to heaven the beacon burns,
The shires have seen it plain,
From north and south the sign returns
And beacons burn again.

Look left, look right, the hills are bright,
The dales are light between,
Because 'tis fifty years tonight
That God has saved the Queen.

Now, when the flame they watch not towers
About the soil they trod,
Lads, we'll remember friends of ours
Who shared the work with God.

To skies that knit their heartstrings right,
To fields that bred them brave,
The saviours come not home tonight:
Themselves they could not save.

It dawns in Asia, tombstones show
And Shropshire names are read;
And the Nile spills his overflow
Beside the Severn's dead.

We pledge in peace by farm and town
The Queen they served in war,
And fire the beacons up and down
The land they perished for.

"God save the queen" we living sing,
From height to height 'tis heard;
And with the rest your voices ring,
Lads of the Fifty-third.

Oh, God will save her, fear you not:
Be you the men you've been,
Get you the sons your fathers got,
And God will save the Queen.

When Housman wrote the foregoing, the empire was at its zenith. Queen Victoria—then a mere girl of sixty-eight—would rule another fourteen years, to be succeeded in 1901 by her fifty-nine-year-old son Edward VII, whose own disgraceful antics as Prince of Wales bear comparison with any of the goings-on of his great-great-grandchildren of the present time. For more than a century, royal princes and princesses have on the whole behaved foolishly, but the throne survives, no thanks to the heirs of the occupant.

Why this should be is as great a mystery to some people as is, to me, the riddle of what is in that pocketbook that Queen Elizabeth II is never seen without, that hangs by its strap from her left arm. It is a talisman, perhaps? Does it contain a loaded revolver against the time when her patience finally snaps and she blows away her husband or one or another of her erring children?

Perhaps we shall never learn. What we need not learn, because the example has been there for fifty years, is that Queen Elizabeth II is one of the most remarkable women of our age, indeed of any age I can think of. She has put up with her children, with a succession of prime ministers ranging from the mediocre to the ferocious to the feckless. She has watched as the ancient structures of English life have been dismantled, down to pastimes that harmed nothing except the envy that is the global blight of our era, that is at work everywhere at all times. Her royal house has been torched both figuratively and in real life. In an era when duty is regarded as a joke, she has done hers, and she has done so with grace and endurance.

It cannot have been easy. Housman understood the solid rock upon which Victoria's crown rested: an entire nation prepared to do its duty. God will save the Queen, he says to us, but only if Englishmen continue to behave as they have, as they would some fifty years after he wrote his poem, when so many came to owe so much to so few.

But what about today? Nothing in her upbringing could have prepared Elizabeth II for the way we live now. Nothing could have prepared her to be a thoroughly postmodern wife and mother, when even those loyalties that are supposed to glow at the very core of family life are in danger of extinguishment by a self-indulgent moral and ethical relativism. From hand-kissing to toe-kissing in one generation! How does she soldier on when the fabric of politics and commerce wherever one looks is suffused with the ethos perpetrated by our recent president: If everyone's lying, no one is. When no one is expected to remain constant from one day to the next. That one does what one feels like, as one pleases, as a matter of right, of entitlement.

So—how does she do it? How does she preserve her dignity when all about her have sold theirs for whatever the market will pay? As another monarch says in a popular musical play, "Is a puzzlement."

The answer *Continued on page 25*

The Princess Elizabeth in 1932

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TWQ Interview

What Nobody Wants to Say about Race

Author and Civil Rights Commissioner *Abigail Thernstrom* talks to Charlotte Hays.

Abigail Thernstrom has dared to suggest that race relations in the United States are remarkably good and that racial preferences are harmful.

That is why Thernstrom, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, is the most intriguing appointment to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in a long, long time.

Thernstrom is co-author with her husband Stephan, Winthrop Professor of History at Harvard, of America in Black and White: One Nation Indivisible, *a groundbreaking 1997 study of race. Acknowledging that serious problems remain, the Thernstroms nevertheless argue that race relations have been transformed since the 1940s when Gunnar Myrdal wrote* An American Dilemma, *the classic, and bleak, look at race relations in the U.S.*

Although no stranger to controversy, Thernstrom had to be just a little surprised by the reception she received after the House Republican Leadership appointed her to the Commission on Civil Rights.

The appointment came in January—just as the commission was launching hearings in Tallahassee, Florida, into allegations that African-American voters were disenfranchised in the 2000 presidential election. Thernstrom, author of an acclaimed 1987 book titled Whose Votes Count? Affirmative Action and Minority Voting Rights, *might seem a welcome addition to the panel.*

Commission Chairman Mary Frances Berry appeared to be anything but happy to see Thernstrom, however. Described in Salon *as a "vitriolic brawler," Berry, a veteran civil rights figure, cut off the newly-sworn-in Thernstrom in mid-sentence as Thernstrom was introducing herself.*

The Orlando Sentinel *observed that Berry seemed "eager to assert her authority whenever Thernstrom had the floor."*

When the commission's report, which claimed African-American voters had suffered "disfranchisement" in Florida, became public—before Thernstrom had a chance to see it—Thernstrom challenged its conclusions and methods. In an interview with TWQ, *Thernstrom was candid about her struggles with Berry and the commission staff.*

As she spoke on the telephone from her residence in Lexington, Massachusetts, to TWQ *editor Charlotte Hays, Harvard's Winthrop Professor of History could be heard vacuuming in the background. Lucky lady!*

TWQ: *Diane McWhorter, author of*

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Carry Me Home, Birmingham, Alabama, *recently had a piece about Birmingham in the* New York Times Magazine. *It was about the trial of the last defendant in the 1963 bombing of the Birmingham church that killed four little girls. McWhorter seemed to be saying that, despite the outward civility, little had changed in Birmingham since the bombing. What do you make of this effort to deny real progress in racial matters?*

THERNSTROM: The picture has changed radically, and it is time to acknowledge that fact. McWhorter is clearly becoming one of the darlings of the moment in the mainstream media, and I have liked some of her writings in the past. But she is profoundly wrong on this question. It is time for the *New York Times* and the chattering classes in general to wake up and celebrate how far we have come. Their message to whites seems to be: It's 10:00 a.m., and it's time for your daily five minutes of guilt. The mainstream media celebrate the voices of pessimists.

The *Washington Post* recently did some polling on racial attitudes and analyzed the results. In reporting on the poll, the *Post* essentially said, whites are in a state of deep denial; they don't see the radical racial inequality around them. In fact, the actual poll suggests even more confidence in the level of opportunity in American society on the part of blacks than whites. Sixty-one percent of blacks, but only 46 percent of whites, said they believed their children would enjoy a higher standard of living than they did.

TWQ: *In* America in Black and White, *you and your husband quote the journalist Brent Staples. When Staples was in the process of being hired by the* New York Times, *he said his editor wanted to know if he was "a faux Chevy Chase [Maryland] Negro or an authentic nigger," who had grown up "poor in the ghetto, besieged by crime and violence." There is a tendency for white intellectuals to insist that blacks be hostile.*

THERNSTROM: That's true, but becoming less so, which is a sign of progress. I see a dawning recognition of the diversity within the group that we call "the black community," which is not a "community," given the diversity of black experience today. There is an increasing recognition of social class differences and of differences in political values among blacks, although the divisions are not yet reflected in election results.

TWQ: *In your book, you point out that there was such improvement in test scores among black children between 1980 and 1988 that, had this rate of improvement continued, African-Americans and whites would now have the same test scores. What happened?*

THERNSTROM: Nobody knows what happened to stop the progress, which doesn't, in fact, matter. We don't need to know the root causes of a problem in order to try and attack it. In the case of education, we know what good schools look like. But how to put them in place across the country? That's the tough question. The entire public education system is stacked against real change.

TWQ: *What do good schools look like? Often the children who most need education to better their lot in life, including blacks, get the worst schools.*

THERNSTROM: Urban black students, particularly, get an education that is inadequate to their needs. Some wonderful schools are serving them very well, however. They are just few and far between. They all look more or less the same. They are highly disciplined. They offer an often-needed structure to these children's lives. They concentrate on the core subjects—reading and math, mainly. The hours are very long. The school year is very long. The teaching is superb. There is great leadership at the top of the school. And the principal is an instructional leader for all of the teachers. The students read serious literature. And they aren't allowed to wallow in victimization. The teachers deliver a very strong "no excuses" message, even though many of these kids do have a genuinely lousy life. But the teachers don't care what else is going on in their lives; they still have to learn their times tables because when they're thirty, nobody is going to ask whether life in their neighborhood was a bummer.

TWQ: *What about the attack on testing as racially biased?*

THERNSTROM: The tests aren't racially biased. These children need the skills that the good tests assess. These tests give us information that we need.

TWQ: *As you point out in the book, many African-Americans believe that there is lingering racism and that they need the federal government to protect them. That seems to be key to a lot of what happens in politics.*

THERNSTROM: There are good historical reasons why blacks feel so vulnerable without the protective arm of the federal government. It was, after all, the federal government that really broke the back of the Jim Crow South. Federal courts intervened with judicial decisions that insisted upon racial equality. Federal legislation changed the status of blacks almost overnight. But the era of dependence on the federal government should be over. And today, many government regulations are, in fact, impediments to black progress. Government is the problem, not the solution. For instance, the regulatory maze in a city like Chicago is an obstacle course for inexperienced would-be entrepreneurs, many of whom are black and Hispanic. The Institute for Justice

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has long been attacking this problem; it has been representing blacks and Hispanics whose private sector dreams are thwarted by public sector rules.

TWQ: *The African-American vote is essential to the Democratic Party. Neither Carter nor Clinton would have been president without it. I sometimes wonder if some of the bitterness that is injected into politics is just a form of demagoguery, an effort to hold onto this group of voters.*

THERNSTROM: Sure, but the Democrats don't have a monopoly when it comes to demagoguery, which is endemic in politics. Such demagoguery, however, is particularly destructive on the issue of race. The Democratic Party keeps ratcheting up the sense, on the part of blacks, that they are victims, that the deck is stacked against them. And thus we have a racially defined group in America whose members feel angry and alienated—who feel that this country is not their country. And that's a danger to the fragile fabric of American politics and society.

TWQ: *Let's talk about the U.S. Civil Rights Commission on which you now serve. Tell me about its involvement in the recount in Florida and the hearings that were held and your role in the hearings.*

THERNSTROM: The commission held three days of hearings in Florida. And it heard countless witnesses. The bottom line for me: The election was far from perfect in Florida, which was undoubtedly true in other states as well. But, race per se, racial discrimination per se, played absolutely no part in the outcome. And that, of course, runs counter to the commission's report. Its central finding was that blacks were nine times more likely than whites—and I'm putting it in a passive voice deliberately because the commission report puts it in a passive voice—to find that their ballots had been spoiled. The implication was that somehow Jeb Bush and Katherine Harris figured out which ballots were cast by black voters and managed to crumple them up. Or mutilate them in some way.

In fact, the commission had no evidence upon which to rest its conclusion with respect to the rate of ballot error. And worst of all, until very recently, it kept as a total secret the statistical analysis upon which the report was based, so that writing the dissent was extremely difficult. To this day, the machine-readable data and crucial regression tables to which the commission's report refers are both still missing.

TWQ: *Are you saying that you are on the commission but it wouldn't give you this basic information? Who wouldn't show you this?*

THERNSTROM: Chairperson Mary Frances Berry, the staff, and the expert (Allan Lichtman) whom they hired to do the work and who was paid with taxpayer dollars. His work product belongs to the public, but he has not been willing to send me his regression tables and the machine-readable data that went into them, so that I can understand what data he used and how he analyzed them. This has astonished other social scientists, across the political spectrum.

TWQ: *What did the commission tell you?*

THERNSTROM: That it didn't exist. Well, of course it existed. The commission referred in the report to Lichtman's multiple regressions. If they didn't exist, then he and the commission had no basis upon which to draw conclusions and the commission paid for work that wasn't done. This elementary point seems finally to have partially sunk in, and the commission has now posted on its web site some of what I was looking for, but not all. Lichtman has substituted a different table—never referred to in the report. And the machine-readable data that went into his analysis are still unavailable.

TWQ: *Are they closing you out? Why are they doing this? I've never heard of a commissioner not being allowed to see the commission's work.*

THERNSTROM: This is a government agency in a horrible class by itself. The commission is unanswerable even to the commissioners. I have just discovered it's going to Illinois to look at voting rights; we didn't vote on that inquiry. Proposed budgets are supposed to be voted on in June; we have not seen the budget being prepared for submission to the Office of Management and Budget. The published meeting agenda seldom resembles the actual agenda when the commission meets. A House oversight committee is having a hard time getting basic information out of the staff.

TWQ: *The report was leaked to the paper before you saw it. Tell me about that.*

THERNSTROM: I woke up on the fifth of June to see that the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* (and I subsequently learned the *LA Times*) had the report. I was able to read the executive summary on the *Washington Post* web site. I had not laid eyes on the report until then. That was Tuesday. We had a meeting on Friday. I got the report late Wednesday. And so I had from late Wednesday until Friday morning to read it, and on Friday morning a final vote was taken on the 200-page, single-spaced report. The whole thing was a procedural travesty. But the commission in general is run horribly.

TWQ: *Are they trying to issue the report as a unanimous report?*

THERNSTROM: They know that Russell Redenbaugh and I won't sign it. But they are trying to silence us because this is a civil rights agency that does not believe in debate on civil

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The commission seems determined to reinforce the belief on the part of too many blacks that they are a separate nation within our nation, outsiders to the American experiment.

rights issues. Quite remarkable. Their arguments aren't worth going into; they are just flimsy excuses for a partisan assault on the two Republican appointees on the commission. But they are conferring upon the dissent the status of a banned book, which does us a favor. Almost no one wants to read a dissent reviewing the facts surrounding an election long over; banned books are inevitably interesting.

TWQ: *What is your relationship with Mary Frances Berry? Do you talk to her?*

THERNSTROM: No. In fact, I was sworn in during the hearings in Tallahassee, and from the first day in Florida, she didn't even say hello to me. She didn't say welcome to the commission. And when I tried to introduce myself, she interrupted me. I said I was Abigail Thernstrom, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and co-author of.... And she stopped me, saying we were not announcing our books. Being rude to Republicans, I suppose, is always justified; they are evil. But she talks all the time about collegiality on the commission, while at the same time calling me, for instance, a liar.

TWQ: *About what?*

THERNSTROM: She said I lied about the availability of Lichtman's statistical analysis—his regression tables and the machine-readable data that went into them. This was at the Senate Rules Committee hearings on electoral reform. I had to answer that I would never call another commissioner a liar, but I had just heard a lie. It is interesting that she feels free to call me a liar, but also that she can make such a ridiculous charge. At issue was a simple factual matter. Had Lichtman given me all his regression tables and the machine-readable data that went into them or hadn't he? And the answer was clearly no. That was the truth.

TWQ: *Was there any real evidence that blacks were prevented from voting in Florida?*

THERNSTROM: No. There was some evidence that some poll workers were not very helpful to any voters (regardless of race or ethnicity), and there were stories of confusion and jammed phone lines. Perhaps most compelling of all was the evidence of insufficient accommodations for the disabled. But none of these problems had anything to do with race. In fact, there was a witness in Florida who said she had problems with poll workers. I said to her, "Look, it sounds to me as if you had difficulties at the polls, which you shouldn't have had. But it doesn't look to me as if it had anything to do with race." And she said, "Race? Who was talking about race? These were black poll workers." So yes, there were problems. And the state of Florida has taken steps to remedy them. Was there anything distinctive about the problems in that state? I don't think so, but nobody else has put any other state under a microscope, either now or in previous elections.

TWQ: *Do you expect to have to fight the whole time you will serve on the commission?*

THERNSTROM: I will have some more company by the end of December when the president will have appointed two new commissioners. So at that point, we will have a four-four split. And that should change things quite a bit, although Mary Frances Berry may be able to hold onto the chairmanship, and the staff (the political appointees who should have resigned with a new administration) may be able to hold onto their jobs. But really, it's time for her to go and for the senior staff as well to be replaced.

TWQ: *I am going to ask a cynical question. As I said, African-Americans are an important constituency to the Democratic Party. Could the commission's report on Florida's voting be pure demagoguery?*

THERNSTROM: Absolutely. Mary Frances Berry and the majority on the commission were determined to paint George W. Bush as an illegitimate president. And that's what the Florida report was all about. And they clearly wanted to send a message to black voters that Bush is not their president and that the Republican Party is not their party. It's a dangerous message. The commission seems determined to reinforce the belief on the part of too many blacks that they are a separate nation within our nation, outsiders to the American experiment. In fact, precisely the opposite message should be delivered. Blacks are Americans whose families have been here for well over 200 years. They have shaped American culture in a myriad of important and wonderful ways. And the doors of political and economic opportunity are wide open. ◆

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When a Man Loves a Partner

Melinda Ledden Sidak says
don't call her a partner—she's a wife.

Bob Dole is enjoying an enviable second career as a television pitchman, most recently for Pepsi but most famously for Viagra, the anti-impotence drug. The Viagra campaign received all sorts of media attention and commentary, from a multitude of jokes by late night talk show hosts to unctuous praise by talking heads of the former senator's "bravery" in bringing this serious yet suppressed "issue" into the open. Amazingly, however, it appears that no one then or since has commented upon the most striking aspect of those commercials: the senator's use of the word "partner." According to Senator Dole, if your "partner"—not your "husband" or even your "spouse"—suffers from impotence, you need to encourage him to get Viagra to restore your sex life. To my mind, this was truly a watershed moment in the culture wars and signals that the conservative, pro-traditional marriage counteroffensive begun in the 1980s has been defeated.

What's so important about a single word, anyway? A lot. While reality is not so subjective as postmodern philosophers and deconstructionist literary critics would have us believe, the words we use can have a powerful effect. To choose one word over another literally can change the way one thinks about a particular matter. As the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein observed, the words we choose to understand and describe our perceptions of reality are in some ways like playing a game, and every game has its own particular set of rules.

The language of "partner" versus "spouse" belongs to the game of nonjudgmental, relativistic values that have come to dominate contemporary discourse about personal morality. Social historian Gertrude Himmelfarb notes: "[V]alues, as we now understand that word, do not have to be virtues; they can be beliefs, opinions, attitudes, feelings, habits, conventions, preferences, prejudices, even idiosyncrasies—whatever any individual, group, or society happens to value, at any time, for any reason. One cannot say of virtues, as one can of values, that anyone's virtues are as good as anyone else's, or that everyone has a right to his own virtues."

Another aspect of the language game of values is what has been described as the "privileging" of certain words and ideas. Traditionally, the role and status of "husband," "wife," and "spouse" were "privileged" by law, custom, and religion. Only certain persons, with certain defined characteristics, and undertaking certain duties and obligations, could aspire to the rights and privileges of that role. When we use the term "partner" instead, we are demoting, demystifying, and democratizing that role and the institutions associated with it in ways that may be beneficial in some respects but must unalterably change social and religious laws and customs that have stood for thousands of years.

No doubt many would defend Bob Dole's choice of language as simply reflecting contemporary realities. After all, he is far from alone. Every pregnancy book, Lamaze class, and hospital form speaks exclusively about the woman's "partner" rather than her "husband" or even the baby's "father." The cover of a recent woman's magazine article promised "tips to turn your husband on" but the article spoke exclusively about one's "partner." Opinion polls ask questions like, "What are the main reasons that keep you from talking about household finances more often (with your spouse or partner)?" Not surprisingly, legislators in many states and in other English-speaking countries are rewriting laws and regulations to re-

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flect the new nomenclature. In the United Kingdom, applicants for the children's tax credit are required to refer to their spouses as "partners," while in Canada, the legal use of "spouse" is meant to include same sex partnerships. Indeed, some Canadian newspapers actually refer as a matter of style to one's wife or husband as one's "partner." As in—"Mr. Jones and his partner, Mrs. Jones, were on holiday in Nova Scotia." Even some of the marriage tips supplied by the web site *ChristianityToday.com* occasionally use "your partner" instead of "your spouse."

The fact that Bob Dole so comfortably threw out the term "partner" is especially significant, however. As the 1996 Republican presidential candidate, he explicitly championed the traditional moral and cultural virtues of pre-1960s America against the libertinism and laxness of the very post-sixties Bill Clinton. Maybe Dole never believed in his World War II generation morality wholeheartedly or maybe he decided if you can't beat 'em, join 'em. As he would say—whatever. But surely it suggests that even for a respected elder statesman of the avowedly more socially traditional political party, the time-honored notions about the institution of marriage and the gender-specific roles of "husband" and "wife" and "father" and "mother" are gone. Instead, we have two "partners," who may or may not be of opposite sexes, who in turn "parent" their children.

Because we have jettisoned the whole idea of distinctive sex roles within and without marriage, conservatives already have lost the debate about gay marriage, as David Frum observed in a *Slate* debate with Andrew Sullivan a couple of years ago. If you don't think that men and women perform distinct and complementary roles either in marriage or as parents, it is logically pretty difficult to explain why two men or two women can't do the same thing. They, too, can "partner" and "parent."

Similarly, if a partner is accorded the same social and legal status as a spouse, there is no particular social pressure for a man and a woman to marry rather than simply live together. Merely living with someone inevitably reflects a weaker commitment to the relationship than does the more formal institution of marriage, a particular concern when children are involved. Nonetheless, when we refer to both Susie's current live-in boyfriend and Mary's husband of twenty years as "partners" we accord the arrangements equal social status and respect. The law inevitably follows to codify and institutionalize the new social arrangements.

Winning this central battle in the culture wars demonstrates how deeply embedded in contemporary society is the notion of relativistic values, particularly those governing sexual conduct. It also reflects the crucial importance of obtaining the upper hand in the "name" game of what we're going to call various aspects of that conduct. The relativists always have been attentive and clever about nomenclature; a job made simpler for them because they have dominated the avenues of dissemination—the media and the academy. While a counterassault may succeed against some of the more extreme forms of sexual relativism (meet Jane and her partner, Spot the Dog) from gaining social acceptance, it is unlikely to have much if any effect on gay marriage, heterosexual couples who live together, or other hot-button sexual issues.

I just hope I never have to hear Senator Dole introduce Elizabeth as "my partner, Mrs. Dole." ◆

Melinda Ledden Sidak is a writer living in Washington.

Continued from page 19

may be found in a sport of which the Queen is deeply fond: thoroughbred racing. Years ago, I remember listening to the sportscaster Jack Drees call the Kentucky Derby. As the field thundered through the backstretch and turned for home, Drees shouted into the microphone: "And here's where they run on their pedigree!"

This is what I think has kept Her Majesty going. Pedigree. You may call it a matter of genes and disparage it, but you will be wrong, for there is no force in human affairs as tough and essential as the transmission of character and quality from one generation to the next within a single family or tribe. Queen Elizabeth II embodies that thread; she is proof of its sinuous, indefatigable strength. Steadfastly, she has refused to let it atrophy.

She is on the eve of celebrating her fiftieth anniversary as head of an institution that many people will tell us is past all use and should be scrapped. I don't agree. I find the thought of a United Kingdom denuded of its monarch as inconceivable as I suspect most thoughtful British people do. That I do so seems to me to be an occasion for thanks to one person—which I hereby render, prayerfully and joyfully, in the same wide-eyed innocence of spirit in which an eleven-year-old New York boy pressed a worshipful ear to the radio in the pre-dawn darkness of a cold November morning, long, long ago. God save the Queen! ◆

Novelist Michael M. Thomas writes the "Midas Watch" column for the New York Observer.

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Correspondence

Author *Ann Crittenden*, whose *The Price of Motherhood* was reviewed by Jennifer Braceras in the the last issue of *TWQ*, responds:

I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY to respond to Jennifer Braceras' recent review of my book *The Price of Motherhood*. I hope our differences can shed light, no doubt, on a subject that is close to the lives of many of your readers.

The book is a wake-up call, alerting women to the fact that if they become a PCG (primary caregiver) they will be systematically disadvantaged. The book draws on history, economics, family law, sociology, child development, and anthropology to make this case. To portray this as "whining over the lost income of yuppies" is a gross—and snide—distortion.

Anyone, male or female, rich or poor, who devotes substantial time to a child or any other dependent individual pays a huge "Mommy tax" as a Siberian penalty. But lower lifetime earnings are only part of the story.

The majority of caregivers also forfeit their economic independence. A married caregiver's contributions do not entitle her to an equal economic partnership. This can have disastrous consequences to the family for any mother whose marriage fails. Professional or otherwise, she will discover that no good deed goes unpunished. Some 40 percent of the women who have to turn to welfare do so because of divorce.

Braceras ignored completely a central argument in the book, which is that raising children really is the most important job in the world. Economists now agree that human capital is the primary source of the wealth of nations of human development. Experts are right that most human capabilities are formed in the early years of life. Then conscientious caregivers are the most important wealth producers in the economy. This provides a powerful rationale for making sure that caregivers have the resources and training they need to do their job well.

We can differ over what are the best kinds of support, but let's do so without impugning each others' character or distorting our arguments. Your editors' crack that my suggestion of a child allowance would require "cashiers and cafeteria workers to help foot the bill for well-heeled professional moms like Crittenden" falls into this destructive category. You're dead wrong. A universal child allowance, as paid in most capitalist countries, actually redistributes income to poorer families.

I was also not thrilled to read that I start "from the premise that money and prestige outweigh personal fulfillment and time." Come again? For eighteen years I arranged my life and my time around my son's needs, and no reviewer whom I have never met deserves to suggest otherwise.

Braceras also falls back on the device used since time immemorial to keep mothers down: the argument that their emotional rewards outweigh the lack of respect and recognition accorded to their work. Well, I feel sure that farmers experience the joys of working with the soil, and soldiers have the deep satisfaction of knowing that they are serving their country. But that hasn't prevented either group from demanding and obtaining extraordinary public subsidies for their services. Mothers' contributions entitle them to at least as much support, and women needn't be shy about saying so.

We can all agree, for example, that the high marginal tax rates on married women have to go. If nannies earn Social Security credits, so should mothers working at home. Moreover, if any portion of Social Security is privatized, both spouses should have an equal claim on the so-called Personal Savings Accounts that would be created. Unless PSA's are effectively FSA's—jointly owned Family Savings Accounts—the lower-earning, caregiving spouse will be penalized once again.

There are undoubtedly other plots of common ground. If women of all political stripes can respect our differences and work together for a few well-chosen changes, I am convinced there is no limit to what we can accomplish. ◆

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One last observation . . .

Garden Party

Wladyslaw Pleszczynski goes to the EU sculpture show.

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE NOW, but not that many months ago the U.S. and Europe weren't quite getting along. Then someone came up with a brilliant idea. Why not have the Europeans shower the U.S. with peace offerings, which we would proudly display along one of the loveliest locations in our nation's capital? Without further ado, the European Union in April proceeded to plant about thirty fresh sculptures from its fifteen member countries atop the Kennedy Center's vast terrace. Instead of forming a cozy sculpture garden they protruded like scattered weeds or a collection of unwelcome litter along the smooth, clean plates of the terrace floor.

But even if its art wasn't in the right place, the EU's heart surely was. The show was titled *Connecting Worlds: Contemporary Sculpture from the European Union.* Dr. Günter Burghardt, EU ambassador and head of delegation, praised it for giving "tangibility" to the vision of some of Europe's "foremost contemporary artists." NPR said the show was "supposed to be a demonstration of European unity and cultural excellence."

And all for our edification, if Laura Coyle, the Corcoran School of Art's curator of European art who helped organize the displays, is to be heeded. "Most Americans are woefully ignorant of contemporary art abroad," she writes in the introduction to the exhibition's catalogue. "*Connecting Worlds* helps to remedy this." A fellow-traveler in the best sense, Ms. Coyle just loves her long-suffering Europeans, whose "rich heritage … can also be a tremendous burden." Backwater America has much to learn.

Ms. Coyle notes that Italy's Enrica Borghi had once used a piece "to comment on the pollution of the Danube River" (none of it fortunately caused by NATO). Though that work wasn't part of the recent show, Ms. Borghi's mere presence with another item inspired Ms. Coyle to rue the condition of "the great river of Washington, DC" that runs past the Kennedy Center. Just so you know, "the ecosystem of the Potomac is also sullied and endangered."

Art for environmentalism's sake was in good hands with Ms. Borghi. For the Washington show she created a red-white-and-blue multi-triangled design made up of a thousand plastic bottle caps topped off with pebbles of glass. The piece is called *Mandala,* which shouldn't be confused with Nelson Mandela.

The catalogue defines it as "a prayer dedicated to the infinite to save nature." No word on whether the infinite is a she.

Another piece devoted to what Ms. Coyle calls "overconsumption" was Austrian artist Manfred Erjautz's *Container.* It was by far the sturdiest item in the show, which isn't surprising given that the eponymous subject is an impressive factory-built cargo container. Its interior walls and floor, alas, have been defaced by a rich array of countless product logos, all of them meant to symbolize the indiscernible "babble of voices" advertising has let loose on our vulgar world.

With typical modesty, the EU didn't come all this way to celebrate its economic achievements. In fact, in the show's view European man's struggle is just about over. The point was driven home by Christina Saradopoulou's *The Myth of Sisyphus,* which might be called the centerpiece of the exhibit since it was the first item visitors saw on leaving the elevators for the terrace. Atop a red steel incline rested an ornate—and hollow—steel ball, waiting for its Sisyphus who evidently had fallen victim to automation. An electric powered track was supposed to keep the ball moving—but luddites at the Kennedy Center wouldn't allow it to be plugged in. No big deal. As a Greek Embassy spokeswoman told NPR, "You don't really feel sorry for Sisyphus because that process in itself, pushing that rock up the hill as best as he can and as well as he can and as beautifully as he can, is his purpose in life." She must not have noticed that he'd been cut from the team.

Who's the joker who came up with the line that the exhibit was held over beyond its initial June 15 closing date "by popular demand"? Still, even with better material the Europeans would have been hard-pressed to compete.

The Kennedy Center terrace offers perhaps the most spectacular view of Washington anywhere. The southeast corner presents a stunning vista of the Washington Monument and the Lincoln and Jefferson memorials. To the west there's the thriving verdancy of Roosevelt Island, to the northwest a graceful bend in the Potomac at Georgetown.

The Europeans came to play, only to be swallowed by America's grandest sculpture garden. ◆

Wladyslaw Pleszczynski is a distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution.

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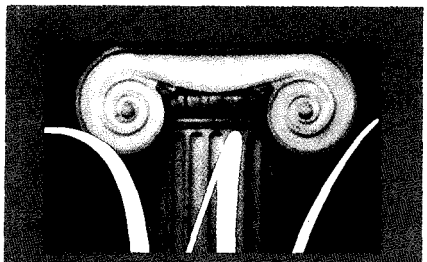

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